



# Write with Excellence

N. J. Lindquist

[www.writewithexcellence.com](http://www.writewithexcellence.com)

## Organizing to Write: Your Space

### Examples of Files You Might Need

#### Non-Fiction: (mine are blue folders)

Filler Ideas  
Column Ideas  
Article Ideas

Book Ideas  
Musings  
A file for each article or book that is begun or outlined  
Each book idea also gets a labeled clear plastic box.

(Note: Each article gets a green dot on the name tag each time it is published.)

#### Fiction: (mine are red folders)

Ideas (Characters)  
Ideas (Theme)  
Ideas (Setting)  
Ideas (Plot)  
Bits and Pieces

Book Ideas  
Story Ideas  
First drafts  
A file folder per idea that's been begun  
Each book idea also gets a labeled clear plastic box.

#### Poetry: (mine are purple folders)

#### Drama: (green folders)

#### General: (yellow folders)

Active File  
Queries out  
Leads to check  
Markets to try  
Expenses/Pay  
Agent/s  
Writer's Associations  
Magazine Subscription Records

Stamps, SASE's, Postage Rates (if needed)  
Books to read  
Press releases  
Bios and Resumes  
Brochures  
Promotion Ideas  
Correspondence

#### Research: (grey and dark green files)

- one set for each "writing" topic I have an interest in  
(e.g. openings, how to write..., how to market, how to promote, etc.)
- one set for each "other" topic I have an interest in  
(e.g. Toronto police, teen problems, homelessness, etc.)

#### Speaking and Workshops: (black files)

1 file per idea or workshop



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## Additional Thoughts on Your Writing Space

If at all possible, you need a computer, or at least the use of a computer. Not simply because it makes the actual writing and storing of your work so much easier than ever before, but because nowadays many of your contacts can be made via e-mail and much of your research can be done on the Internet. You don't need all the bells and whistles. A simple computer that lets you write with MS Word or a similar program is adequate. Personally, I prefer a desktop to a laptop because I write in one place and want the best ergonomics.

Other basic needs include a computer desk, preferably at the right height for your keyboard and you. You will need something to keep your files in—whether it's a filing cabinet, a cardboard file box, or something you create. A bookshelf or book case for your books. Good lighting so you don't strain your eyes. And a good chair so you don't get back problems.

Many people write with music on, so you may want a radio or iPod. You might even want a TV so you can work on some less intensive things while keeping track of a show you love. A printer is also helpful. A bulletin board and a calendar are useful. So is a phone. And if possible, an area—either a large desk or a table or counter—on which to spread out your books and first drafts.

If you have room for a “real” office, a U-shaped configuration, with counter tops on either side at the right height for you in your chair, and shelves underneath, is by far the most efficient. It doesn't have to be fancy. A couple of old counter tops and some shelving from the lumber yard can make a fairly handy unit. Or you can perhaps find a “real” desk at a place that supplies used office furniture.

If at all possible, get an adjustable chair that fits you comfortably.

### Where should you write?

**Ideal:** Your own room with all the space, shelves, filing cabinets, and desk space you can use.

**Reality:** Anything you can get.

- a corner of a room
- a desk in your kitchen
- a laptop at a table in the library or in a coffee shop
- a notebook while commuting on the subway or a bus
- a digital recorder while walking or watching your kids play sports



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## Questions to Consider About Your Writing Space

1. Where do you write?
  - I have my own office to write in
  - I have a desk where I can write undisturbed
  - I share a room and it works well
  - I share a computer and it works well
  - I prefer writing outdoors or at a coffee shop
  - I sort of have a place to write but it's not working
  - I really have no place to write
  
2. If you don't have a designated writing area, what would you need to create one?
  - A desk
  - A computer
  - A bookcase
  - Files and something to put them in
  - A corner somewhere
  - A portable desk in a box or perhaps a large briefcase
  - Other?
  
3. Think of a time when you were writing freely, even if it was just for a short time. Where were you and why do you think it worked?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Look closely at every area of your house, apartment, or room, and think about how you could carve out a writing space that would work for you for the next year or so.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. If you have a dedicated writing space, what could you do to improve it?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Come up with a list of things you need to do or buy in order to get your ideal writing space, and determine which one you'll do first and when you'll do it.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.
  - 6.
  - 7.
  - 8.
  - 9.
  - 10.